



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

Fiber Artist Marti Brown to Demonstrate Stitched Handbags, Totes at Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Release Date

Nov. 26, 2013

Contact: Gwen Heffner

Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

859-985-5448 Ext. 230

gwen.heffner@ky.gov

BEREA, Ky. – On Saturday, Dec. 7, Marti Brown, of Shelbyville, will demonstrate her stitched handbags and totes from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea.

Brown earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the Cincinnati Art Academy and her Master of Arts degree in art education from the University of Cincinnati. She moved to Kentucky to teach in Bardstown, then settled into marriage and raising her three children. When her husband went into the ministry, Brown began teaching again at a Christian school.

Brown said she and her husband come from families where alcohol abuse negatively affected their family unit. In their ministry, she and her husband work with communities that have similar substance abuse difficulties. Their ministry is informed by their first-hand experience, and they work to counsel and help people whose lives are challenged like their own have been.

Brown is the children's minister at Shelbyville's Living Waters Church and also works as the children's minister of an urban church for children. She looks at her creative work in fiber in a similar way that she does her ministry.

"I feel like I am trying to help children pick up the pieces of their lives and put them back together again into something good and whole," she said. "It is pretty much what I am doing with my fabrics. I am picking up beautiful scraps of material – like the scraps of life – and I am putting them back together to create something that is beautiful and functional."

Brown searches for unusual fabrics of high quality and is always looking for color, pattern and texture in the fabrics. She has no pre-conceived ideas when buying fabrics – but when the right ones are on hand and come together visually, she begins stitching. While she has general types and styles of bags, there are no two alike.

"That's the fun in making these, because with no set design, each piece becomes something new. Brown explains, "A lot of the time the design of the purse gets dictated by the fabrics themselves."

While Brown searches for unusual fabrics, she rarely creates a design without a bit of tweaking. Her bags are made of high-end quality fabrics, and all the seams that are weight-bearing have been stitched twice for durability. The grommet bags with knotted handles are great for toting lots of "stuff," and the weight of the bag pulls against the knot, causing it to become tighter and stronger.

Brown's work is regularly available at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea, Exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Celebrating 10 years in 2013, the center currently features works by more than 700 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. Special exhibits on display include, "Capturing the Art of Sport: Works by Kentucky Artisans," through Feb. 22, 2014. The center lobby features an 18-foot Christmas tree decorated with sports-themed ornaments in University of Kentucky blue and University of Louisville red. For more information about the center's events call 859-985-5448, visit us on

Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentucky.artisan.center, or go to the center's website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Stitched fabric bags by *Made on Magnolia* artist Marti Brown